



FY 2006 QUARTERLY REPORT (1ST QUARTER)

Cooperative Agreement No. 119-A-00-00-00039-00

**Civic Education
On-Site Technical Assistance**

REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

**Submitted to the
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
By IFES**

October 1, 2005 – December 31, 2005

I. OVERVIEW

IFES-Kazakhstan began the 2006 reporting period by working with its partners in support of secondary school civic education, conducting or preparing for projects involving training of teachers, classroom-based civics instruction, and student extracurricular activities. Guided by its workplan for Year Three of the Cooperative Agreement extension, IFES worked with particular attention towards instilling long-term sustainability in its projects. An enhanced monitoring and evaluation effort was also launched with IFES personnel visiting schools in six oblasts and liaising with IFES' local coordinators to discuss implementation of project objectives and areas in need of further development. Examinations were finalized to measure student aptitude and the impact of the civic education course and textbook, and a database of student participation in the extracurricular activities was updated, together with a website of SAC activities that can be viewed by students from across the country.

IFES conducted a limited technical election assessment observation of the December 4, 2005 parliamentary elections, and will share results with USAID and the Kazakh CEC. The project was undertaken during a free day in the regional civic education monitoring process. IFES developed an observer checklist for this purpose which facilitated the recording of observations and the compilation of recommendations.

IFES continued to finesse its relationship with the Ministry of Education and affiliated educational institutions such as the Academy of Education. The Ministry welcomed IFES' efforts to train teachers and provide general guidance on interactive teaching methodologies that could apply to other subjects outside of civics. IFES has been embraced as a partner contributing to the big-picture discussions of the development of a national civic education curriculum as well as for its implementation of projects in individual schools, and learned that the Ministry, together with the Academy of Education, will be conducting a regional education conference in the spring of 2006 to discuss and compare state standards of secondary school education. The push for standards in civic education, and the fate of civics itself as a stand-alone course, is expected to take on particular relevance at the event, which IFES will provide assistance in planning.

II. PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

Civic Education Textbook Project in Kazakhstan

With an eye towards the future, the IFES civic education team worked to incorporate modifications for a revised version of the civics textbook for secondary school students at the same time as it deployed the remaining stock of the currently-existing textbook to eight schools throughout the country for use in the 2005-2006 school year. IFES staff also began to contact all pilot schools directly to monitor the progress of the project and determine the needs for materials and training to be addressed during FY2006. Under the direction of Chief of Party Jennifer Wilson, IFES Civic Education Consultant Simon Jenkins worked on-site in Almaty with the IFES-Kazakhstan civic education team and its

local partners to render revisions to the book for use in future years. During the quarter the team was able to accomplish the following, which fall into line with its goals and objectives under its 2005-2006 workplan:

- Completed the editing and layout of Part I of the new version of the Russian language student book and Teacher's Guide;
- Continued working on the Kazakh language textbook and Teacher's Guide;
- Worked with local reviewers and contributors such as Yevgeni Zhovtis to receive suggestions for modifications to individual textbook chapters;
- Distributed the remaining copies of the current edition of the textbook to eight schools (246 Kazakh language books and 505 Russian);
- Rendered needed updates and modifications to Volume II (chapters 12-16) of the book;
- Conducted monitoring with teachers at pilot schools and distributed teacher evaluation forms, including pre- and post-tests;
- Worked with the Academy of Education and finalized the adaptation of a *Generic Teachers Guide*, produced by IFES, that is used to augment teacher training for all subjects.

The Civic Education Consultant and civic education team also discussed and prepared the new module for the Training of Teachers event held in Almaty in November. A new task was created and implemented for the beginning and ending of the training which focused on teachers' understanding of the learning process.

IFES-Kazakhstan Project Coordinator Janar Mendebayeva and Program Assistant Oleg Kozyrev led the effort to incorporate comments and suggestions made by outside reviewers of the draft revision of the textbook. One challenge was to determine how the necessary upgrades could be incorporated without major disruption to the textbook's layout and design, which corresponds strictly to state standards on printing. The majority of upgrades included rephrasing text in some chapters to make it more easily and readily understood by all students and replacing the interactive exercises in some chapters with others based on lessons learned during implementation in the classroom.

Some of the suggested changes, including changing the order of chapters, were given careful consideration. IFES takes great care to ensure that the "flow" of the textbook is conducive to a "natural progression" of topics and facilitates student learning. Since the best method of upgrading and improving a product is by "field testing" among users, IFES feels confident that the newest version of the civics book fully incorporates the best results of field testing throughout the country and the suggestions of experts and practitioners (including, most importantly, teachers and students). Once changes are made in one language, IFES consults with its language experts to make sure they are correctly rendered in other language versions of the textbook, which is critical so that the concepts, which may have no easily equivalent words in native languages, are represented with the full understanding of the reader.

One of the newly created tasks involved “learning theory,” in which the optimal methods that students digest and retain information were presented. The task was created so that teachers and students alike could recognize which approaches to learning would work best for them as well as for their communities as a whole, since the traditional methods of teaching or information dissemination were decidedly not interactive.

Program Assistant Aidar Albekov finalized the layout of Volume One of the Kazakh-language edition of the textbook and Teacher’s Guide, while Program Assistant Oleg Kozyrev reviewed Chapters 12-16 of Volume Two with Consultant Simon Jenkins, making necessary corrections and additions. Additional tasks involved revising the information for the civil society chapter, to bring it more up to date with civil society developments in the country during the year, and inserting a redrafted *foreword* submitted for inclusion by Minister of Education Byrganim Aitimova. The final version of each volume was submitted to IFES’ Kazakh language translator for final review prior to publication.

IFES worked with representatives of the Almaty city Maslikhat and the Republican Association of Maslikhats (Karaganda) to gain updated information for the chapter on local governance. Oleg Kozyrev contacted Majilis Senator Zaufesh Batalova concerning an informational request regarding citizens’ participation in law-making processes. The local government chapter was buttressed by new information on the structure and processes of local government, which is a subject about which little information has been made available in the past. As the topic of decentralization, a stated objective of the current President, gains newfound importance and relevance in the aftermath of the December presidential elections, the need for information on local governance takes on even greater importance. As updates to this chapter continue to be prepared for inclusion in Volume Two of the revised book to be launched in the fall of 2006, IFES continues to consult with potential contributors including the Youth Congress of Kazakhstan, whose chairman agreed to an interview to confirm outstanding points of concern in several chapters.

Finally, IFES reviewed a number of new designs for the cover of the new volume of the textbook. As the cover’s content takes on great importance and is significant in making a good initial impression, a design must be chosen which reflects the diversity of the Kazakhstani student body and appeals to their sense of nationhood. Design concepts were submitted by local contributors and are being considered for their overall appeal and conformity to state standards of textbook production. A new *foreword* for the textbook was prepared, and IFES is working with the Ministry of Education to have it signed by the Minister for inclusion in the new edition.

The final phase of redesign and updating involved obtaining quotes from printing houses. IFES needs to secure additional funding from donors to ensure that printing and distribution of updated volumes will take place during the next quarter. Requests for textbook printing quotations were sent to six print houses in Almaty. Final selection of the print house will be made when all quotes are received and reviewed.

Monitoring and Evaluation

During the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2006, which coincided with the first semester of the new secondary school year, IFES worked to update information on the number of schools participating in the civics textbook and course project. The process of monitoring is among the most essential parts of the project that will provide ongoing feedback as to the progress made in helping students become “civic-minded” via classroom instruction. IFES has used pre-testing as one preferred method for evaluating the knowledge base that students have entering 10th or 11th grade vis-à-vis the material to be presented in the course and measuring progress at the end of the year via exit examinations. Given that the IFES textbook is not a stand-alone course in and of itself, i.e. it is part of the Man and Society course, and is often used as supplementary material, the entry and exit exams are not rendered specific enough that they cannot measure a broader picture of students’ knowledge of civic education. Rather, the questions encompass a wide range of topics connected to civics, though certainly with focus on the areas in the IFES book that they will be studying during the school year.

IFES-Almaty’s monitoring and evaluation team received 150 pre-tests from Taldykorgan, evaluated them and entered data into its main database. IFES also conducted monitoring by calling pilot schools in Almaty, Almaty oblast, Shymkent and South Kazakhstan oblast.

Pre-test results were received from Essyk (30 students), Aktobe oblast (28 from Alga city) and twenty from Almaty oblast (an Uygur region). IFES’ school monitoring took place on December 2-5 in Taraz, Uralsk, Oskemen, Karaganda, Taldykorgan and Petropavlovsk, with an additional 40 tests received from Aktobe, 37 from Kapchagai, 101 from Almaty oblast and 20 from Karaganda. Monitoring data based on entry exams was also recorded for schools in Shymkent, Panfilov, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Semipalatinsk.

IFES staff consisting of six small teams traveled to six different oblasts with the purpose of monitoring IFES’ civic education project activities, both classroom-based and extracurricular.

All teams visited schools to monitor the civics course, meet with teachers, students and representatives of the school administration; attended civics classes; learned about how students have been involved with the SAC, SLGD and summer camp projects, and finally, observed the work of local IFES coordinators with regards to implementing and supporting projects. IFES staff prepared special questionnaires for each project and made advance arrangements for site visits to deploy the questionnaires.

In total, six teams visited twenty-three schools and came up the following outcomes and issues:

- Teachers and students like the IFES-sponsored civics course and textbook project and reported positive changes in students’ education in civics, leadership, speaking and thinking skills and in terms of achieving a more “democratic mindset.”

- Many schools are still using the IFES textbooks printed in 2002 and 2003 and teachers are requesting a new textbook as soon as possible. The old book is getting out-of-date and falling to pieces. IFES has sought better binding materials to mitigate this problem, and as mentioned above has created a revised version that will supplant older editions.
- There are some new teachers using the book who have not been trained by IFES or its approved training team to teach the course. In addition, many teachers who previously taught the course took the IFES teachers guide with them when they left the school rather than properly passing the course materials and information to new teachers.
- All teachers expressed the desire to participate in refresher trainings and receive updated methodological materials as well as to keep in touch directly with IFES and its local affiliates more often. IFES monitors noticed some issues with the grading system for the civics course, and it became apparent that teachers need more tools to evaluate students' knowledge and values.
- As some local IFES coordinators stated, rural schools tend to receive less monitoring attention than urban ones. This underscored the need for an expanded network of local monitors. In addition, transportation and communication difficulties associated with the locale of some rural schools, especially in wintertime, can create problems for students and teachers trying to attend student tournaments and trainings.

Based on the above-mentioned problems and issues, the monitoring event resulted in the following recommendations and follow-on actions:

- To improve communications with schools by contacting them directly from the IFES office and making sure that local coordinators were mentioned as contact points;
- To obtain new letters or orders from the Ministry of Education for regional Department of Education offices on different issues such as the distribution of textbooks, logistics for upcoming tournaments and seminars and other activities. The regional Department of Education office could, in turn, issue additional instructions on the IFES course that would be received directly by school administration officials that would assist IFES efforts directly in that school;
- As soon as the new version of the textbooks are printed, distribute them directly to schools by train and post or IFES staff;
- Identify new regions that most need assistance with trainings, textbooks;
- Increase monitoring activities and travel to regions;

In response to requests from teachers during the monitoring project, IFES added new information to Chapter 16, "Women and Democracy," that better reflects women's experiences in democratic transition in Kazakhstan.

Civic Education Teacher Training

From October 10-11, IFES' Astana Representative conducted a training on "interactive teaching methods and classroom management" for 18 Russian-speaking educators from various regions of Kazakhstan at the Republican Teachers Retraining Institute in Almaty.

The Senior Program Coordinator, the Project Coordinator, the Astana Representative, and the Program Assistant conducted another seminar for experts from the Ministry of Education Textbook Center and teachers from Astana-area schools from October 14-15. The seminar was organized by IFES in response to a request from the Center's Director, Mrs. Abylkasymova.

As a part of the effort to institutionalize the project, IFES conducted a five-day training on interactive methodology and classroom management in cooperation with the Republican Teacher Re-Training Institute in Almaty. This event was attended by 46 participants, 27 teachers of Kazakh-language schools and 19 from Russian schools. The participants, mostly trainers from regional Teacher Re-Training Institutes, represented regions including Aktau, Atyrau, Aktobe, Astana, Taraz, Karatau, Uralsk, Kokshetau, Shymkent, Kostanai, Kyzylorda, Semipalatinsk, and Pavlodar. The Russian group was trained by Bibisara Beisenbayeva, IFES' Astana Representative, and Ms. Alya Chokusheva. Chokusheva was trained by IFES trainers last year and worked as an IFES trainer for the first time at this training. It is expected she will continue to be a trainer for many years to come, and train new trainers in the future herself. IFES-Kazakhstan Program Coordinator and Kazakh language specialist Janar Mendebayeva and Program Assistant Meruert Almanova worked with the Kazakh group.

This training was a bit different from others in terms of modules and duration. The trainers developed a new module that best answers the needs of teachers within the context of the upcoming reforms in the education system. Another modification was that this time the participants had to go through three days of theoretical training (using interactive methods of teaching) and two days of practice. Since it isn't possible to visit every location to hold trainings, every teacher was given the opportunity in the last two days to demonstrate their potential skills as a possible trainer with the thought in mind that they can conduct trainings for IFES in their regions. Trainers tried to give the participants as much information as possible and answer all their questions by using different exercises and tasks. Almost all activities (except for those that required the traditional lecture approach) were done using interactive methodology. During the practical training at the end, some participants admitted that it was the first time they had used interactive methods and therefore asked the audience not to judge them too harshly. Throughout the training participants mentioned how important this seminar was for them and how very lucky they were to take part in it. The participants eagerly and frequently expressed their gratification to IFES for conducting such an "unusually" valuable and useful conference to meet the needs of Kazakhstan's teachers.

Overall, participants of both groups were satisfied with the program and trainers. They enjoyed the highly professional approach toward each and every person at the session and

the helpful and friendly approach of the training session. On the last day of the program, participants were asked to fill out training evaluation forms and all of them mentioned that:

“Even though the trainers were young, they were very professional and highly qualified. We are proud that our teachers can now change the world by introducing new modules and ways of understanding to our students. At an official level we hear about the 12 year-education system that requires us to change our thinking and set new standards but they only tell us where we are going, not how to get there. Your trainings help us understand how to do new things to get the new results and this will help achieve objectives while surviving the transformation. We learned to look at upcoming changes with new eyes and we are not afraid to say that we ourselves can be that change. We will spread the word for IFES but we have only one request – you should have this kind of events more often so other teachers can have their chance to visit with you.”

At the end all participants received IFES certificates and were part of a group photo.

IFES Senior Program Coordinator Marat Bigaliev designed a draft of an ethics code for regional coordinators. It includes issues such as conflict of interest, code of conduct with partner organizations, dealing with mass media, etc. The reason for creation of such a document is that there were inconsistencies on the part of some of the coordinators in terms of distribution of IFES materials and even-handedness towards teachers and students. Bigaliev also gathered information from Regional Coordinators as a part of the monitoring and evaluation cycle.

IFES staff worked with the Academy of Education to complete the revision of the Generic Teacher’s Guide and print a limited number of copies for distribution at the Training of Trainers event.

Student Action Committees (SAC)

During the quarter, IFES received requests for SAC trainings to be conducted in many cities and towns throughout Kazakhstan in addition to the ones outlined in its workplan. It was learned as well that 2005 Democracy Summer Camp participants from Astana have set up new SACs at their schools. During the quarter, IFES’ Astana Coordinator, Bibisara Beisenbayeva, was providing them with all necessary information and support in addition to monitoring their activities.

IFES received reports from several SACs in the cities and surrounding regions of Karaganda and Pavlodar in northern Kazakhstan. IFES’ Program and Financial Administrative Assistants gathered information on SAC activities, including numbers of students as well as type of activities, as they called schools for monitoring of the civic education textbook project.

On October 27, IFES' Program Assistant, Meruyert Almanova, conducted a SAC training for thirty-one Vice Principals and teachers from schools in the city of Kostanai and the surrounding region. The training was conducted in Russian with some special accommodations made for four Kazakh-speaking participants. IFES makes it a priority to provide, as possible, equal degrees of training and materials for both Russian- and Kazakh-speaking students and teachers. Kazakhstan remains plagued by a lack of quality learning materials in the Kazakh language, and IFES takes great care to produce high-quality documents and training that serve the Kazakh-speaking population.

IFES' Program Assistant met with Irina Vlasukova, a local expert on extracurricular activities, to discuss the next SAC Forum to be held in the spring of 2006. Vlasukova is responsible for drafting a new agenda, updating the application forms for SAC students, as well as setting the format for presentations and other program documents to be used in this forum. The Program Assistant also continued to work with the IATP Center to develop the SAC website and learn how to modify it. It is very important to publicize the results of SAC activities so that students from across the country can share and exchange information on their activities as well as monitor successes as the project continues through the school year. IFES also emphasizes the SAC website to the government as an example of the merits of the project and as a way of increasing the Ministry of Education's influence and stake in the project for long-term sustainability.

Student Local Government Day (SLGD)

The Senior Program Coordinator, Marat Bigaliev, finalized the layout and design of the newly updated SLGD manual. SLGD training and activities will take place during the next quarter in accordance with the IFES workplan.

Democracy Summer Camps (DSC)

The questionnaire for summer camp applicants was evaluated and revised.

IFES-Kazakhstan has changed the name of Democracy Summer Camps to IFES Summer Leadership School due to the politically sensitive climate in the country. IFES hopes that the change will encourage government institutions and private sector donors to continue to support the project.

IFES sent a letter to a number of potential corporate sponsors, including Petro-Kazakhstan, about the possibility of supporting a camp in Kzylorda during the summer of 2006. IFES will continue every effort to increase the participation of the corporate sector to support these events over the long-term as it strives to hand over the project to the Ministry of Education and local NGO partners in the near future.

Ministry of Education Meeting

IFES' Astana Coordinator, Bibisara Beisenbayeva, met with the Minister of Education in Astana to discuss future steps for the civic education program, the inclusion of an

introductory letter from the Minister for the textbook, and plans for the International Conference on Education to be held in May 2006. Long-term plans were also discussed and the Minister expressed the desire to work with IFES on areas of curriculum reform and civic education strategic planning as the process of course and curriculum modification continues leading up to 2008.

Presidential Elections

Senior Program Coordinator Bigaliev developed a draft election observation sheet for the Presidential election on Dec 4, 2005. It included three parts – opening, voting and closing.

Chief of Party Wilson met with many different election monitoring groups including OSCE/ODHIR, Elections&Democracy, NDI, IRI and ENEMO in the run-up to the presidential election.

IFES-Kazakhstan issued a press-release defining the terms of the IFES election observation mission and distributed it in Russian and English to media, candidate campaign headquarters, various local government bodies and partners.

All IFES-Kazakhstan staff members as well as the Civic Education Coordinator and Elections Specialist from IFES-Kyrgyz Republic received accreditation as international observers for the election.

IFES monitored voting for the presidential elections on December 4 by mobilizing six teams working in six different oblasts. The teams were in the field for monitoring of IFES civic education programs and took advantage of having a “free day” on Sunday to conduct a technical assessment of Election Day voting.

On December 4, thirteen IFES staff members participated in a short-term, technical election observation mission in Petropavlovsk, Karaganda, Taldykorgan, Taraz, Ust-Kamenogorsk and Uralsk oblasts and Almaty city. In addition to all IFES-Kazakhstan program staff, representatives from IFES’ office in Bishkek arrived to assist with the project. Though there were no major violations observed on Election Day, IFES identified several areas for improvement that will be included in the assessment to be prepared and submitted to the CEC. IFES will focus on the technical aspects of Election Day and will plan to meet with the CEC in January to present and discuss the assessment. The main issues to be included in the assessment with recommendations for improvement are as follows:

- Inadequate training of EC members
- Violations of secrecy of the ballot
- High percentage of invalid ballots, both paper and electronic
- Inadequate number of paper ballots available at polling stations
- Lack of voter trust and understanding of electronic voting system
- EC composition: 7 EC members – too many at some stations, too few at others

There were also some positive developments over previously administered elections that can also be included in the assessment:

- Comprehensive voter education campaign
- Reduced numbers of militia and government officials present at polling stations
- Improved regulation of family voting

An observation report will be delivered to the Central Election Commission, with a copy provided to USAID. The CEC has expressed an interest in reviewing the forthcoming report to discuss next steps in improving the administration and management of voting and preparing for future elections.

IFES' initial findings were not unlike those outlined by OSCE in their preliminary assessment, in terms of some inconsistencies in the processing of voters and the vote count, though it did note that the system was improved from the previous parliamentary elections, which took place in 2004. The bigger issues revolved around the pre-election process, such as ballot access, ability to conduct equal campaigns, access to air time, and the ability (for opposition) to conduct their party activities freely and without harassment. Still, in an administrative sense the elections appeared to be a step forward for Kazakhstan even if the atmosphere surrounding the elections was not ideal. Also, the electronic voting system was used to a greater degree than during the parliamentary elections, and voters in many locations had a choice of either the traditional paper ballot or the electronic voting system. There were suggestions made by some international observers and opposition that lack of paper ballots and pressure to use the new electronic voting system marred the "choice," but ultimately more voters chose electronic voting than during the parliamentary elections. Still, some fundamental issues still plagued the electronic vote, including technical glitches and, perhaps more importantly, the lack of a paper trail to verify results. An opportunity may present itself in the aftermath of the elections for progressive measures to be taken, in accordance with a stated objective by the President to look at decentralization. This would involve expansion of elections to Akims, would require specific training and work with local election commissions, and necessitate a comprehensive voter education campaign. This campaign would need to include sponsorship of candidate debates in addition to general voter education about the workings of local government and activities to motivate citizens' participation in choosing a representative for an office that was previously (and presently remains) directly appointed.

III. PARTNERS

USAID

IFES completed analyzing data in preparation for completing the USAID indicator reports for FY2005. The Senior Program Coordinator updated the IFES benchmarks for FY05 and unified them into one file with the previous benchmarks for FY03 and FY04. The document was sent to Dina Khasanova at USAID/Almaty.

IFES-Kazakhstan Chief of Party Jennifer Wilson participated in USAID's Partners Forum in November where the new Mission Director, Chris Crowley, was introduced. Following the official part of the meeting, Wilson spoke with Mission Director Chris Crowley and Ambassador Ordway regarding the low-level IFES observation effort for the presidential elections, which was carried out while IFES civic education monitors were in the field working with local schools and IFES' local partner representatives.

Jennifer Wilson and IFES-Washington Regional Director for Europe and Asia Michael Svetlik participated in the USAID Democracy Partners Meeting in December. The meeting included a USAID review of FY2005 overall performance and results, a report on elections activities presented by partners, and an update on the USAID strategy development process. Wilson and Svetlik then met with D/G officers Kim Delaney and Dina Khassenova to discuss IFES work in Kazakhstan and progress in current programming.

Ministry of Education

In October, the Senior Program Coordinator and the Astana-based Coordinator met with representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Textbook Center and the Year 12 Education Reform Center. While working with the Textbook Center and its director still presents challenges, other representatives of the Ministry of Education and its various departments and centers are supportive of the IFES civic education course and textbook and other projects. IFES learned that civic education will be one of the main optional or elective courses included in the 12-year system¹. However, the Ministry is still working on educational goals, objectives and standards and expects them to be finalized by the end of 2006. IFES has been able to participate in these discussions through regular contact in Astana with Ministry officials, and has been invited to be a regular contributor to the process of reform and development of the curriculum and state standards for education which, being determined during calendar year 2006, will affect and essentially mold the education system for years to come. Development and design of new state textbooks is tentatively scheduled for 2007-2008. Zhumarzhan Kamkenovich continues to work closely with IFES and is helping to advance discussions on the role of the IFES course and textbook as civics is weighed as part of the national curriculum. The chance to influence those discussions during the calendar year bodes well for the sustainability of civics at least as an optional course, with the possibility of a more mandatory arrangement, and IFES-produced material is among those being considered for this, over the long term. More direct contact with Ministry officials in Astana will be needed over the next several months to continue advancing this dialogue, which will be aided by a major strategic conference planned by the Ministry for the spring of 2006. Also advantageous from an IFES standpoint are the contacts maintained with influential persons in the Ministry as a result of the Study Tour to Romania conducted in 2005 with AED funds via USAID. These contacts are firmly committed to civic education and developed a vision for the future of civics study in Kazakhstan that was forged during the Study Tour, an opportunity for which they credited IFES and AED/USAID.

¹ By 2008, Kazakhstan is expected to add a 12th year of secondary school study. The current system, as traditional dating from Soviet times, incorporates 11 years of basic education for students.

The Ministry of Education has included the International Conference on Education proposed by IFES as a follow-up to the Romania Civic Education Tour into its work plan for 2006. The conference is scheduled for May 2006. The Ministry put Romania Study Tour participant Makpal Zhumabaevna from the Academy of Education in charge of the conference and has suggested that the event be held in Almaty.

In November, Chief of Party Wilson, Senior Program Coordinator Bigaliev, and Civic Education Consultant Jenkins traveled to Astana to meet with the Minister of Education. They discussed the progress of the IFES textbook project and its status in Kazakhstan. IFES suggested that the Civic Education textbook and teacher's training projects and IFES' experience with piloting the course can be a great resource to the Ministry as they work to reform the Kazakhstani education system. The Minister asked if IFES would allow them to distribute copies of the book to other textbook authors and perhaps put an electronic version of the book up on the Ministry of Education website. The list of approved books for schools was compiled in December. IFES submitted the entirety of book one (chapters 1-11) to the Ministry (Textbook Center) for review and requested that the book be included in the list.

Kazakh Academy of Education

IFES met with Academy of Education Vice-President Makpal Zhumabaevna to discuss different issues related to the upcoming May International Conference. The Ministry has agreed that Makpal should be in charge of planning the conference and that they will cover the majority of the costs. They requested that IFES assist with the development of the program and the invitation of international participants and guests. All parties agreed that the conference should be held in Almaty rather than Astana. Though this event was originally proposed in a TARF to AED/USAID as follow-up to the Civic Education Study Tour, it has become a much larger project with greater Ministry involvement than anticipated. The conference will showcase development of civic education standards as part of a comparison of the different changes to education systems of countries in the region. Such an event has not been held previously to this degree, and it has long been the hope of international assistance providers in the field of education that a conference showcasing education systems be constituted, with high-level exchanges as well as by teachers of different countries, to compare best practices and discuss how state standards of learning are formulated. IFES will recommend that particular attention be paid to establishing standards of civic education as part of the mandatory national curriculum of a country. The opportunity to help organize such an event of this magnitude will place IFES under a favorable spotlight from which to advocate for civics as a vital course of study with a comprehensive system recommended for students from primary through secondary schools and into universities and colleges.

During follow-up meetings in November, the Academy agreed that it will be responsible for coordinating the event. The Ministry has agreed to fund some aspects of the conference in addition to funds to be provided through a TARF. It is likely that IFES will need to look for additional funding from other sources (Embassies) to fund the travel and

participation costs of international specialists. The conference has already been put into the Ministry's calendar for May 2006.

Other Organizations

Wilson, Bigaliev and Jenkins met with AED to discuss changes in the TARF (based on Ministry and Academy of Education goals) and to talk about what funding and other assistance is needed.

During a regularly-scheduled civic education trip to Astana in November, the Chief of Party and the Senior Program Coordinator met with Nurlan Kuzhanovich Kumarov at the Ministry of Emergencies. Mr. Kumarov is responsible for the protection of citizens within the Ministry's Civil Defense Department and as such is coordinating the effort to address the avian influenza threat in Kazakhstan. During the meeting they discussed the government's activities, plans and potential areas for cooperation. Mr. Kumarov reacted positively to the idea of working with IFES to expand efforts to educate citizens about avian influenza.

Jennifer Wilson met with Sabit Imandosovich Aymagambetov, vice head of the Ministry of Emergencies, Almaty department. They discussed opportunities for cooperation on an earthquake preparedness program that educates the general population by working through KSK/KSD. The Ministry is interested in working with IFES on the project and is interested in the civic responsibility aspect. Mr. Aymagambetov suggested that the Ministry's educational center for disaster preparedness can be used and that their trainers could be involved in the project. The Ministry is willing to write a letter of support or sign a protocol of understanding. A Russian language project description will need to be developed in order to move forward with local partners.

IFES had ongoing meetings with Brian Tucker, President of GeoHazards International. They discussed opportunities for cooperation on a continuation of the basic disaster preparedness project. Mr. Tucker and the local authorities are all supportive of IFES' suggestions regarding expansion of the project as a tie-in to IFES' civic education focus.

IV. MATERIALS PRODUCED

- IFES promotional brochures on civic education projects have been finalized and formatted in Russian. They have been translated into Kazakh and printed.
- Civic education monitoring and election observation materials were finalized and printed for use during the December Presidential Elections.

V. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Among the most significant developments and project achievements of the quarter, IFES notes that:

- Cooperation between IFES and the Ministry of Education has increased in light of the progress of the textbook project, IFES training sessions, seminars and plans for the upcoming international conference on education.
- Recent articles about IFES in the Teacher of Kazakhstan newspaper have raised awareness among teachers, school administrators and Ministry officials including the current Minister of Education.
- IFES summer camp participants have already begun to establish SACs and demonstrate increased community involvement in their cities.
- IFES is seen as an excellent resource for election activity support by both government bodies and partner organizations including other USAID partners.

Yet many challenges continue to present themselves, some ongoing and some new. Among them are:

- The Ministry of Education is still in the process of restructuring and establishing new standards, procedures and policies. They do not expect to complete the process until the end of 2006 and the new textbook development is tentatively scheduled for 2007-2008, after the end of IFES' current cooperative agreement.
- The Textbook Center Director, Mrs. Abylkasymova has proven challenging to work with and has been somewhat defensive in dealings with IFES as it tries to gain approval of the textbook for use in schools. This is not unusual among different actors involved in the education system at various levels who may be protective of their individual projects. The need to convince and mollify different actors during the process of getting the textbook approved, tested, revised and re-approved has been one of the more challenging features of the current program. Making this even more laborious is the fact that persons in positions of importance tend to be shifted around with some frequency, necessitating almost a re-introduction of IFES' goals and mission in supporting the development of civic education in Kazakhstan.
- The current political climate in Kazakhstan has presented new challenges in implementing IFES' projects, which is the same for all implementers in the democracy and governance sector. The threat of restrictive NGO legislation followed by new regulations on the conduct of assistance and support activities has created new obstacles and barriers to conducting programming, which mirrors developments in neighboring countries as well. Many have attributed this to the result of "color revolutions" in the former Soviet sphere over the last couple of years, while others point to the influence of a growingly suspicious and authoritarian Russia as a contributing factor. Private sector donors have increasingly been shying away from supporting democracy-related activities out of concern of their implementation viability (particularly in the political realm). IFES has proven it can run the gauntlet with fewer problems than some other organizations, though the overall operating environment in a country as large as Kazakhstan has presented increasing challenges over previous years. It is expected that this perhaps might abate somewhat in the aftermath of the presidential election in December 2005 and the relative warming of relations between the U.S. and Kazakhstan, though Russian influence is a potent and

powerful force that influences Kazakhstan's dealings with its domestic NGOs as well as international assistance providers. Still, given the changes taking place in the education sector and the opportunities to work on local election issues, at the invitation of the Kazakhs themselves, the opportunity exists to continue conducting serious programming that will make a lasting impact.

Administrative

IFES has begun the re-registration process that will incorporate the change in the name of the organization to IFES and the change of address. The Finance Coordinator prepared and filed all tax reports. She also updated the list of IFES property in accordance with U.S. government inventory reporting guidelines.

Other

IFES was mentioned several times in the local media in connection to the election observation. On Election Day, the Chief of Party was interviewed by telephone by CNN International twice. She appeared on both the "World News" and "Asia Today" programs. The CNN interviews were translated and re-broadcasted on Kazakhstan's *Khabar* TV station.

VI. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Performance Indicator	Indicator Definition & Unit of Measure	Data Source	Data for Q1 FY 2006	Data FY 2006 (Q1+Q2+Q3+Q4)	Projections for FY 2006
Curriculum Development					
# of New Students Participating in the Civic Education Course	Student Participation and Reach of the Textbook and New Teaching Methodologies	Participating Schools	New students to be added during the second semester.		Original: Civics classes in 30 schools added, with minimum of 900 new students added; cumulative total of 41,600 students participating at the end of the workplan year. Revised figures to be determined based on printing capacity and final confirmation of participating schools.

Teacher Trainings					
# of teachers participated (# of trainings conducted)	Teacher Participation and Reach of New Teaching Methodologies	IFES	115 teachers participated in 3 trainings for the IFES course and 2 SAC trainings		Minimum of 100 regional education staff will be trained by IFES directly and 600 new teachers trained in new methodological schools. Trainings conducted by education staff of participating Teacher Training Institutes.
Student Action Committees					
# New Students Participating in SACs (# of Women)	Student Participation and Reach of Extracurricular Civic Education Activities	Teachers/ Mentors	45 new students (35 female)		240 students in 2005-2006 Academic Year participating in at least 16 new SAC “events” in a minimum of six new locations. Eight SAC trainings conducted. Existing SACs continue from previous years with sustainability index measured and success rate monitored through direct observation by IFES and IFES regional coordinators.
# of SACs Formed (# of Activities)	Reach and Activeness of SACs	Teachers/ Mentors	3 new SACs 5 new activities	To be conducted next semester.	
Student Local Government Days					
# of Students (# of	Student Participation	IFES	0	To be conducted next semester	200 new students in the 2005-2006

(# of Government Officials) Participating in SLGD	Participation and Reach of Extracurricular Civic Education Activities That Promote Real-Life Learning			next semester.	Academic Year, in SLGDs taking place in twelve locations.
Democracy Summer Camps					
# of Camps conducted (# of students participated)	Student Participation and Reach of Extracurricular Civic Education Activities That Promote Real-Life Learning	IFES	0	To be conducted during the summer.	75 students participating in 1 Democracy Summer Camp. Funds permitting, a minimum of 20 students from Kazakhstan will participate in a Regional Democracy Summer Camp at a location to be determined.
Information Resources					
# of Hits on the Website	Awareness and Interest in IFES Resources	IFES	Maintained by IFES-Kyrgyzstan.	13,177	Increased number of hits to website.